

In mid-September, the Energy and Commerce Committee, of which I am a member, took up the legislation. In crafting a bill, the committee worked with stakeholders from academic and research institutions, patient advocacy groups, scientists, grantees and NIH personnel.

In the last five years, Congress doubled NIH's budget to approximately \$28 billion but did not address the internal structure of the agency. This influx of new money, while funding some groundbreaking research, also had the effect of funding duplicative research within the NIH in different divisions, sometimes without knowledge that similar work was occurring within the NIH. In light of the major budget increases NIH has received in recent years, the reauthorization bill presented a great opportunity to work with interested parties and NIH to ensure that federal dollars are being utilized in the most effective way.

Major provisions of the legislation include: authorization of an approximately seven percent annual increase in the NIH budget in fiscal year 2007, an approximately eight percent increase in fiscal year 2008, and "such sums as may be necessary" through 2009; creation of a new, agency-wide electronic reporting system to catalogue all of the research activities of NIH in a standard format; limitation of the overall size of NIH to the current 27 institutes and centers; establishment of a "common fund" to support especially promising research being conducted by multiple institutes or centers; and creation of a Scientific Management Review Board, which is charged with evaluating NIH's structural organization at least once every seven years.

H.R. 6164, which I cosponsored, was endorsed by more than 40 leading scientific societies, research institutions and patient-advocacy groups, including the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, the Association of American Universities, the American Heart Association, the March of Dimes and the Parkinson's Action Network.

The reauthorization bill, the first of its kind in thirteen years, was approved by the Senate on December 8 and by the House in the early morning hours of December 9. It now awaits the President's signature.

I am pleased the bill passed on such an overwhelming bipartisan basis. I believe the research performed by NIH is vital to achieving further advances in basic scientific and biomedical research. The has consistently been a leader throughout the world in medical research and innovation, and this strong reauthorization bill will ensure that these standards continue.

